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The prolouge

[image]

Tall, mossy figures stand in front of me, I blink my eyes in confusion. The ground below me was soft, grassy and full of dew, darkness blocked most of my vision, and a grey mist crept in, it had an odd scent to it. "Hello?" A call out, it only echoes into the deep forest. I pad forward, "hello..?" I ask again, still no answer. As the mist closes in on me, it chokes me. I can't breath, I panic not sure of what to do.
My eyes jerk open, and I'm back in my cozy bed. The same thick fog covered the room, still panicking I leap up and look around the room. *Fire!!* I think, as I see the red hot flames surrounding me. I can spot a small opening were the flames had not reached yet. I bound over the open area and yell, "Marbella! Where are you?" Marbella was my sister, we were very close and I couldn't stand to lose her.

All I could hear was a crackling of the fire for a long moment. Then, a hoarse yelp came from my left, I looked searching for her calico pelt. I spotted it under the small table next to the twolegs long, comfortable den. I leap up onto it, "Come on- we've got to get out of here!" I yell back. Marbella races out under the table and we weave through the fire to our flap door. Everything is a blur of fire, smoke and trees as we sprint out to the forest.

Chapter One

[image]

I felt something grasp my scruff, then gently set me by other fluffy kits my size. My fur started to get hot, and felt trapped. I struggled to my paws and hobbled over my litter mates to an open space. Long, soft grass blades surrounded me, covered with dew. My fur begins to cool off and I drift to sleep once more.

A small paw prods me and awakes me. "Hnn..." I groan, and turn and smell my sister, Robinkit. "Ravenkit, I've opened my eyes! Open yours *right* now!" She demanded I rolled over to face her then got up. I could hear her paw steps right behind mine. Annoyance filled me, why did Robinkit have to be so bossy? I sniffed, and smelled the sweet, comforting scent of Crystaldawn, my mother. I slumped against her soft fur and her long tail wrapped around me. Robinkits scent is close, and I knew she was in front of me.

"Are you scared? Ha! Scaredy-mouse! Scaredy-mouse!" I was furious, and I sighed a fine. I took a deep breath and opened my eyes. An overwhelming amount of colors filled my vision, all to blurry to make out anything. Robinkit was a brown, molded tabby. Her eyes were a brilliant sapphire and her chest and paws were white. She looked surprised, then stalked away. I didn't get Robinkit sometimes.

I looked at Crystaldawn, she was pure white. I tilted my head, I wonder what I look like. I turn, looking at my back then at my chest and paws. I was a soft white color. All of a sudden, something toppled me over, and sent me rolling away. I grunted, a white she-cat with brown tabby stripes stood in front of me, her coat was dappled with darker flecks- she was seemed very tall. I stood up straight and fluffed out my chest to looked bigger. I smelled her scent, this was Dawnpaw. She came to visit Mistpool often, and loved her kits. "Got you! I learned that move from Snowpaw," she mewed proudly. Dawnpaw squinted at me, the said "You've opened your eyes! They look just like Robinkits," I blush, then she slips out

of the den.

I look up, brambles cover the mossy, grassy celling. I look back at Crystaldawn, "What's out there?" I ask, curious of Dawnpaw went. She turns, delight filled her eyes. "You've opened your eyes!" I nod, then she focuses back on my question.
"Out there? Camp,"
"Can I see it?"
"Hm, not quite yet, Ravenkit,"
"Why? Is it dangerous? I've opened my eyes, you know. I can conquer anything now!"
"No not in camp, its not dangerous..."
"Then I can go!" Before my mother could answer, I dash out, bumping into Robinkit on the way. Ferns cover the entrance and I can hear my sister on my heels. Sunlight covers my vision for a moment, and then I try to focus on something. I see a huge pile of fresh-kill, there was two rabbits, three birds and a few mice. Sounds overwhelm me, just for a moment though.
Tons of cats of all different colors and sizes pad around, I saw a white tom with a crow dangling from his jaws. He was scaling a ledge, it had small parts were it jutted out. He looked smaller than the cat behind him, who was a huge tabby tom. *That must be Snowpaw!*
Glancing around, I spot a towering rock. I saw a small gray cat and dark tortoiseshell talking intently. I strained to hear what they were saying, but just then Robinkit padded to my side and said, "C'mon! Let's see what's in that hole over there!" She flicks her tail to the right, a hole about tail length across, and was surrounded by small bracken and pebbles. She dashes over to it, just avoiding the fresh-kill pile.

I want to see what they're talking about.. I think to myself. So I pad over to the towering rock, but making sure to stay on the opposite side of the rock so they couldn't see me. "I see, Dappledstar. But what about the truce between us? If we fight them, then they might want to take the Holly rocks back." The small grey tabby says, I figured the tortoiseshell was Dappledstar.
"This is a battle we *must* fight, Webheart. We can protect our own territory from MistClan. This conversation is over," Dappledstar finishes and pads away, into the rock. Webheart looked worried,

and I take a step forward, and step on a twig. The small cat jerks her head towards me. *Busted!* I freeze, she looks around, then comes close to me.

"We're you spying on me, Snowkit?" She squints her blue eyes, she looked like Crystaldawn. Large eyes, small paws and a long tail. "I-I.." I couldn't think of what to say, if she told Dappledstar, would I not become a warrior? Panic overwhelmed me and I stare at my small paws. "Hmm I suppose a little kit like you would be curious whats going on in camp... Perhaps a little too curious.." I hated being called a 'little kit'. But I shrugged I off.

All of a sudden, a burst came from my right. I looked over, a tom who looked just like Webheart was racing towards the nursery. I spotted something in his mouth, I realized it wasn't something, it was a someone. "Robinkit!" Her body was limp and he raced into the nursery. "That's Littlebird- my twin. He's our medicine cat. Let's go see what's wrong..."

Chapter Two

[image]

I pad out of the nursery, my chest was fluffed out, my head held high and my tail up straight. Every cats' eyes were on me and Robinkit. Dappledstar glanced at us, from Highrock she seemed so powerful and commanding, yet graceful and delicate. Long shadows scrape the long grass as we take our places in center on the clearing.

Almost six moons had gone by sense I'd opened my eyes, and today was the day that Robinkit and I became apprentices. I scanned the crowd, looking for Owlfrost- our father. He sat close to the elders, Owlscar, Cloudfur and Leaftail. He looked at me, I searched his face for emotions, but found none.

"Today, Robinkit and Ravenkit have reached six moons and it is time to start their training until they be warriors. Their father, Owlfrost, is a great warrior and hopefully these kits will follow in his paw steps. Robinkit, please step forward." As my sister stalked forward, Dappledstar paused. "From this day forward, until you have earned your warrior name, you shall be named Robinpaw. The Clan honors you for your speed and slyness," she pauses for another moment, scanning the crowd.

"Snowspeck, you will be her mentor," she announces. The pure white tom with light grey specks stepped forward and touched her nose, then Robinpaw turned to touch Dappledstars nose. They stepped back, leaving a path for me. "Ravenkit, step forward,"

Excitement bubbled up inside of me. I hope no one saw my hind legs shaking. Per dawn light covered the sky as I padded up to Highrock. "Ravenkit, until you have reached the age of twelve moons, your name will be Snowpaw. The Clan honors your skill and speed," she lets the Clan take it in before continuing, "I will be mentoring you,"
"Ravenpaw, Robinpaw! Robinpaw, Ravenpaw! Robinpaw, Snowpaw Ravenpaw!" The Clan chanted. Crystaldawn bounded up to us,

along with the rest of BirchClan. I felt warm inside, would be sleeping in the apprentices' den, tonight!

Chapter Three

[image]

I focused on the tortoiseshell. Her lip was curled back and her claws unsheathed. I jumped up, turing in midair, I landed on her back and pulled her scurf. She ducked out of my grip and before I knew what was doing, Dappledstar jumped onto my back. My legs collapsed, but I rolled over and raked her belly. My claws were sheathed.

"Very nice, Ravenpaw," my mentor comments. Both our pelts were filled with sand from rolling around, carelessly in the sandy grass. It was only my third day of training, and I'd caught a small vole, along with knowing about four battle moves.
She was teaching me so much battle moves because MistClan- an easily angered Clan- wanted Holly rocks back. This meant battle and BirchClan was *not* going to loose our main hunting spot to MistClan. "That's enough combat for today. On the way back to camp, I'll show you were a mice nest is. We'll get one or two probably," she says. I nod and pad out off the sandy grass and onto the soft new leaf-fall grass.

As we scale the entrance to camp I can see Robinpaw waiting for me at the bottom. When I get to ground-level, she greets me with a quick lick over my ear. "Nice catch," she comments to my fat mouse. We settle down down next to Snowspeck at the heather patch. "Mind if we sit?" My sister asks. Her mentors head jerks around, "Not at all," we settle. I pass my mouse to Robinpaw and start washing my paws and swiping them over my muzzle and ears.

"Your sandy! Train hard?" He asks, a mew a yes and notice that Ebonykit and Stormkit being throughly washed by their mother, Mistpool. *More apprentices? No, they're only four moons old,* I think. Then I notice that Mistpool looked excited. I glance at my sister an her mentor, "Why is Mistpool excited? Well, more excited than usual?" Snowspeck explained that her kits were meeting their father today, Rabbittail. He was a warrior of MountainClan. It was against the warrior code to mate with cats of other Clans, but they did.

Everyone was peaceful to the warrior, though.

As dusk was approaching, I saw a large tabby figure enter camp, escorted by Spottedwind and Sunfall. I squinted, seeing small tufts of fur on the tops of his ears and a small rabbit-like tail. This must be Rabbittail. I saw Greypaw, Sunfalls' apprentice, scurry up to the MountainClan warrior, eager to meet him. I got to my achy paws, I'd been cleaning out the elders den with Robinpaw all afternoon and it seemed as if sleeping for a moon would barely be enough energy to walk a step.

I headed for Highrock, intending to tell Dappledstar that Rabbittail arrived. I peered around, no one was watching me. I put my ear to the overhanging lichen and listened,
"It's impossible for them to know, though!"
"For now, Crystaldawn their clueless. But as they grow into warriors, they're bound to notice you and I. If.....find out....."
"Dapp...ar, please I'd do *anything* to..eep....." The conversation started to cut out as more cats welcomed Rabbittail. I backed away, afraid to interrupt. I raced away from the rock, all of sudden frightened that I'd ease dropped. I rammed into a hard surface I looked up, Bramblefur looked alarmed. "Watch were put your paws. Now go welcome Rabbittail," the deputy was firm in ways, but when it came to kits and elders, he was as protective as a bear to its cubs.

I saw the large tom padding close to the nursery. His eyes shine with pride as he saw the two kits. Stormkit had his chest fluffed out, tail wrapped around his paws and whiskers straight. Rabbittail nudged them both, then licked them on their ears. I looked up, Silverpelt was starting to shine. I decided to eat and share tongues with my littermates. I chose a chaffinch, plump and round. As I settled, Greypaw padded up to me, "We're on dawn patrol," I groaned, "*Wonderful,"* sarcasm bursts through my voice. He plopped down next to me and helped me pluck the feathers off of it, for price of half of it. When we finished, we went to chat with Rabbittail. He was laying near Highrock, with Ebonykit and Stromkit playing on him. I felt warm inside, watching them.

Chapter Four

[image]

Wind caught in my whiskers, my tail flowed behind me, my legs raced hard and my mind was spinning, trying to remember the rout. Greypaw and Webheart were at my sides with Robinpaw and Owlfrost in front of me. Heather parted as we whipped by. I craned my neck, trying to see the Hollyrocks.
All of a sudden, the tabby pelt in front of me slowed, so I did the same. "Crouch down!" I head Sunfall whisper. I did so and waited. The ground in front sloped down, leading to Hollyrocks, while ferns and holly bushes surrounded us.

"I can smell MountainClan, MistClan and RippleClan, they must have just arrived," Greypaw whispered into my ear. I sniffed the air, a disgusting fish smell and a snowy, wild taste and a forest, ungroomed scent. He was right. I nod. "Charrrrge!" I hear my mentor say and we race down the slope, brushing against the yummy-smelling berries.

I huge heap of cats lay in front of me, tabby, grey, white, black, ginger, torbie, calico, tortoiseshell, grey tabby, white with black stripes, ginger with white flecks, brown with scars, white with red a stripe, black with grey splotches, every pelt I could of imagined along with blue, green, yellow, amber, hazel, grey and purple eyes. I stood there for moment and gazed down.

"That's a lot of cats..." I head Greypaw next to me breathe. I raced down, with my den mates next to me. I saw a massive, smooth boulder with three cats up on it. I glaced to the left, I smaller grey-pink-orange tom stood next to me, he had a white splash on his chest. He turned his head, yellow eyes blazed into my blue ones. He smiles, and I mew, "Who-who's on the Hollyrock?"

Did his whiskers just twitch? He blinked then answered, "My leader is the grey cat, his name is Rainstar. The cat next to him is Ravenfur, the MistClan deputy. I'm not sure why Featherstar isn't there. I've heard she was in her last life and there was an outbreak

of green cough. Hopefully she's feeling okay," those words made me shiver, and I could imagine the old leader dying, coughing in her moss bed with Ravenfur and their medicine cat, Hailshine, "And your leader Dappledstar. The RippleClan leader is Berrystar, he's a pale creme tom. I'm Thrushfall, by the way,"
"I'm Ravenpaw, and that's my sister Robinpaw," I say, pointing with tail to the tabby and white she-cat.

"Let the Gathering begin!" I heard the MountainClan leader, Rainstar, yelp. "In MountainClan, we have two new warriors, Redstrike and Thrushfall!" I smiled at him, and looked for this 'Redstrike'. I saw a lot of looks at a white she-cat with a darker red stripe down her back and onto her tail. A murmur of approval from the Clans was heard and as Rainstar continued, "Prey is well so far, but there's an increasing amount of monsters," he stepped back, letting Ravenfur take his place.

"MistClan is grieving deeply from the death of Featherstar," gasps broke out as he continued, "Some cats have heard that an outbreak of green cough has struck the Clan, well our greatly honored leader did ***not*** die from the sickness. She was near the thunderpath, I believe a monster went off its course. It hit her, and help was just not fast enough. I will be going to Crescent Lake tonight. Rainstar, I kindly ask you to let your patrols not harm us. We're only doing what StarClan willed, am I right?"

Rainstar looked slightly confused at his way of words, but nodded slowly. Then the tuxedo tom stepped back, letting Dappledstar take her place. "BirchClan is flourishing, we have two new apprentices, Ravenpaw and Robinpaw," the Clan let out a mumbled excitement as the tortoiseshell leader continued. "Their training is going well. Prey is getting scarcer, but the Clan is not weak."

At moonhigh, Rainstar dismissed the gathering and soon we went back to the moorland. My paws ached and all I wanted to do was curl up in my moss bed with Robinpaw and Greypaw and feel warm with a filled belly. I sighed, it was getting chilly and soon their wouldn't be any heat in forest, even in the sun.
When we did reach camp, it was almost deserted. News of Feathertar's death spread like a rapid fire. I padded to the stump, where a newly lined nest awaited me. I grinned, and plopped down

in it. It was thick.
I fell asleep instantly.